

Annual Report

Grant No. G-5-99-20-056
Fiscal Year 1999-2000



Prepared for USDA - U.S. Forest Service
Fire & Aviation Management - Region 5

By

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I. State Fire Assistance Program (SFA)

- A. **Goal.** To provide protection for forest, brush, natural areas, and grassland to the extent needed to hold fire damage below the level at which it would interfere with high-level, sustained yield of products and services from these lands.

B. **Objectives.**

1. Provide fire protection coverage on 3,360,000 acres throughout the State.

a. **Prevention**

Mission. To minimize man-caused fires by improving DOFAW's prevention program via training and adoption of contemporary techniques for public education measures.

- i. Carry out the Cooperative Forest Fire Prevention Campaign, e.g. brochures, posters, signing, etc.
- ii. Participate in fire prevention activities, e.g. Smokey Bear appearances at various parades, schools, farm fair venues, etc.
- iii. Develop a risk hazard analysis and prevention plan for the Hamakua community, Hawai'i.

Accomplishments:

Items i-ii: Fully attained; item iii ongoing.

- i-ii* a) Smokey Bear has made appearances throughout the state during this period. Smokey made an appearance at the Honolulu Youth Fair in October, where over 25,000 people visited throughout the day. Smokey made his annual appearance at the Honolulu City Lights tree lighting ceremony in December. He also made appearances with the Kaua'i Fire Dept.'s Sparky the Fire Dog.
- b) Smokey was involved with the Honolulu Fire Department's fire prevention campaign during Fire Prevention Week in October.
- c) Smokey participated in the Makawao (Maui) Fourth of July parade. A DOFAW Type 2 and Type 4 engine was used in the

parade. The entry won a prize for the best celebrity look-a-like contest.

- d) Smokey was a participant in the Maui County Fair parade along with the Maui Fire Dept. He was also involved in the prevention active display at the county fair.
- e) Various fire prevention brochures and posters were distributed statewide.

iii A scoping meeting was held on April 18, 2000 in Hilo, HI with various members of the Hamakua community. This meeting was to gather information regarding the concerns of the community. Two workshops were held on July 13, 2000 to begin the formulation of a prevention plan. The project is ongoing.

Other Accomplishments:

- a) Lands west of Kokee Road (Kaua'i) was closed to the public from May 1, 1999 due to extremely dry conditions. The closure also canceled the goat, deer hunting, and trout fishing seasons. The area was re-opened on Jan. 15, 2000.
- b) The Kula Forest Reserve (Maui) was also closed due to extreme fire danger in September. The forest was re-opened in December.
- c) The Kaohe Game Management Area and portions of the Mauna Kea Forest Reserve (Hawai'i) was closed in October due to extreme fire danger. It was re-opened in December.
- d) Prevention workshops were held statewide during the months of April and May. Nancy Porter, R5 Prevention Specialist, provided updated information on the use of Smokey as well as updated prevention materials.

b. **Presuppression**

Mission. To improve the response and firefighting capability of the DOFAW organization and to integrate fire management as an integral part of natural resource management programs.

- i. Continue to improve and maintain the Remote Automatic Weather Stations on Kaua'i, O'ahu, Maui, and Hawai'i.
- ii. Conduct basic firefighting and specialized training statewide, based on Branch needs; collaborate with other fire agencies in the development and use of joint training opportunities.
- iii. Incorporate the Geographical Information System concept including the development of fire maps, fire weather data, and other fire-related matters.
- iv. Participate in the Council of Western State Fire Managers and California-Nevada-Hawai'i Forest Fire Council meetings as well as the Hawai'i State Fire Council and the Hawai'i Fire Chiefs Association meetings.
- v. Conduct in-house statewide fire management core group meetings as needed to resolve protection issues, consolidate training, etc.
- vi. Continue to manage and use all Federal Excess Personal Property (FEPP) equipment statewide in accordance with program regulations; conduct onsite review; complete physical inventory.
- vii. Continue to integrate fire protection with other resource management programs, e.g .ecosystem management concepts.
- viii. Cooperate with the State Civil Defense, State Fire Council, and USDA Forest Service to augment fire data gathering and simulation, resource tracking and assignments, supporting technologies, etc.
- ix. Provide funding to the Maui County Fire Department in order to acquire firefighting equipment to augment their rural fire protection program.

Accomplishments:

Items i-ix: Fully attained.

- i. Information gathering on Kaua'i and Maui continues. The Maui DOFAW Branch reconciled and archived the 1999 NFDRSTEST indices data for the Kula Forest Reserve remote weather station.
- ii. A series of basic and specialized training was done statewide over the course of the year.

An S-234 course (Firing Methods and Procedures) was held on the big island of Hawai'i in March, 2000. The course was taught by USFS training cadre consisting of Rusty Witwer, Craig Lechleiter and Bob Bennett. Participants included personnel from DOFAW, Maui and Hawai'i County Fire Departments, The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i, and the Kaho'olawe Island Restoration Commission.

An A/B chainsaw certification class was conducted on the island of Maui in June, 2000. This is a very popular class among our personnel. Participants included personnel from the various statewide DOFAW Branches. Training cadre included Rusty Witwer and Norm Walker from the U.S. Forest Service and DOFAW State Protection Forester Wayne Ching.

A 16-hour Critical Firefighter Training session was held statewide at the DOFAW Branch level. Each Branch was responsible for conducting the session using the guidelines established by the DOFAW training cadre.

- iii. Fire maps were updated and digitized over the course of the year.
- iv. The Hawai'i Fire Chiefs' Association annual meeting was held at the Turtle Bay Resort on O'ahu in November 1999. Two DOFAW personnel were able to attend the meeting. A presentation was made by State Protection Forester Wayne Ching on DOFAW's fire program and what issues we face.

DOFAW hosted the Western State Fire Managers annual meeting which was held at the Kaanapali Beach Resort on Maui on April 9-11, 2000. Issues that affect the 17 western states as well as the western Pacific territories were addressed at this meeting. Issue papers were written and presented to the Council of Western State Foresters in late May 2000 in Seattle, WA.

DOFAW also hosted the California-Nevada-Hawai'i Forest Fire Council meeting which was also held at the Kaanapali Beach Resort on Maui. It was held on April 12-14, 2000. The meeting was attended by over 95 people ("Teamwork in the Pacific").

- v. The annual Fire Core Group meeting was held in December 1999 at the DOFAW administrative office. The DOFAW Fire Cadre reviewed the fire

program which included the budget for FY00, accomplishments, training, and the review of cooperative partnerships with our agency counterparts.

- vi) In-house inspections were conducted statewide on the FEPP equipment. Screening of equipment was done periodically at the Barbers Point DRMO on O'ahu for excess personal property.

In October, 1999 a statewide FEPP program review was conducted by Region 5. Minor discrepancies were noted and corrected to comply with FEPP program requirements.

During the fiscal year, DOFAW acquired seven flight helmets, one 5-ton combination transfer case, 3 Model 20 slip-on units, 3 Maci crash rescue trucks, 1 mini pumper and 1 chevy 4x4 pickup.

Disposition and transfer of equipment was also done during the fiscal year.

- vii) DOFAW staff reviewed over 100 environmental assessments, EISs, conservation district use applications and film permits. Comments and recommendations were made to these reviews to ensure fire issues were identified and resolved before approval is given.
- viii) DOFAW participated in the annual Makani Pahili (Hurricane) exercise which is conducted by the State Civil Defense Agency. Various local, county, state, and federal agencies were involved in this important exercise. This exercise is a measuring stick on where the state stands in disaster preparedness.

Throughout the year, the Region 5 Fire & Aviation Management office is kept abreast of the DOFAW fire program through electronic mail, reports, and other means of telecommunication. Fire data is gathered and sent to the Region office for use in the national reporting system.

- ix) The Maui Dept. of Fire Control was the recipient of the Volunteer Fire Assistance grant this year. Personal protective gear and hoses & fittings were purchased [see Section II - VFA in this report].

Other Accomplishments:

- a) Cooperated with Riverside Fire Laboratory personnel to install Y2K compatible software Maui Branch computers to retrieve fire weather data from the Hawaiian Commercial & Sugar Company.
- b) Managed the Kula Forest Reserve closure during the Y2K New Year's eve celebration in anticipation of wildfire starts due to the celebrations.
- c) Attended and participated in statewide drought workshops and meetings during the course of the year. The DOFAW State Protection Forester chairs the Environment, Public Health, and Safety Task Force. The completion of the Hawaii Drought Plan is expected to be in September, 2000.
- d) Reviewed various wildfire management plans which were done by the U.S. Army and the Nature Conservancy of Hawaii.
- e) Worked with various USFS Research personnel on determining photo points on the ground for fuel modeling purposes.
- f) Conducted a field trip with S-234 training cadre members Craig Lechleiter and Bob Bennett to critique DOFAW's attempts in creating a fuel break on the island of Molokai.
- g) Attended a hazard mitigation workshop sponsored by Project Impact.
- h) Maintained 11.6 miles of and 8 miles of firebreak on Mauna Kea and Puu Waawaa respectively.
- i) Assisted in the repair of a water main at the Mauna Kea State Park.
- j) Attended a "Leadership Strategies for Company Success" workshop presented by the National Fire Academy.
- k) Initiated the mapping of firebreaks for the Puu Anahulu Game Management Area, Hawaii.
- l) Participated in the Fire/Fuels workshop, which was initiated by the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park.

- m) Performed fuel hazard reduction activities in and around threatened and endangered plant enclosures.
- n) Assisted in the construction of a 40,000-gallon in West Hawaii.
- o) Maintained firebreak roads in the Kuaokala, Mokuleia, Honolulu, and Waianae Forest Reserves.
- p) The State Protection Forester participated as part of a training cadre that provided instruction to the western Pacific co-op. partners in ICS. The training took place in Guam and included government officials from Guam, American Samoa, Saipan, Palau, Micronesia, Chuuk, and Yap. The State Protection Forester also made a presentation at a fire prevention workshop in Guam.

c. Suppression

Mission. To suppress wildfires in a safe manner and at a minimum cost consistent with land and resource management objectives and fire management direction.

- i. Continue to gather statewide fire data and add to the existing database for data analysis and reporting fire history for each Branch.
- ii. Respond to each wildfire incident in a timely manner with appropriate forces as mandated by the provisions of the Land Fire Protection Law (Chapter 185, Hawai'i Revised Statutes). Continue to gather statewide fire data and add to the existing database for data analysis and reporting fire history for each Branch.

Accomplishments:

Items 1-2: Fully attained.

- i. During FY00, 108 fires were reported statewide totaling 22,526 acres. Thirteen fires were reported on Kaua'i, 12 on O'ahu, 11 on Maui, and 72 on Hawai'i.
- ii. The State of Hawai'i continued to have a very dry season. This is the third year of a prolonged drought. Except for two large fires on the island of Hawai'i (10,000 acres in Puu Waawaa and 5,000 acres in Puu Waawaa makai), the fires reported have been very small in nature.

Other accomplishments:

- a) In July, August, and September, 1999, DOFAW participated in large major forest fires on the continental U.S. Six personnel were involved in the Spanish, Turtle, Big Bar, Feather River Complex, and Mt. Hough fires. The participation on these major conflagrations was a first for DOFAW.

II. Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA)

- A. **Goal.** To organize, train, and equip the Maui County Fire Department firefighting force to efficiently and effectively prevent, control, and suppress fires in remote areas.

- B. **Activities.**

The Maui County Fire Department used the VFA grant to acquire personal protective gear for their personnel throughout the county which also includes the islands of Moloka'i and Lana'i.



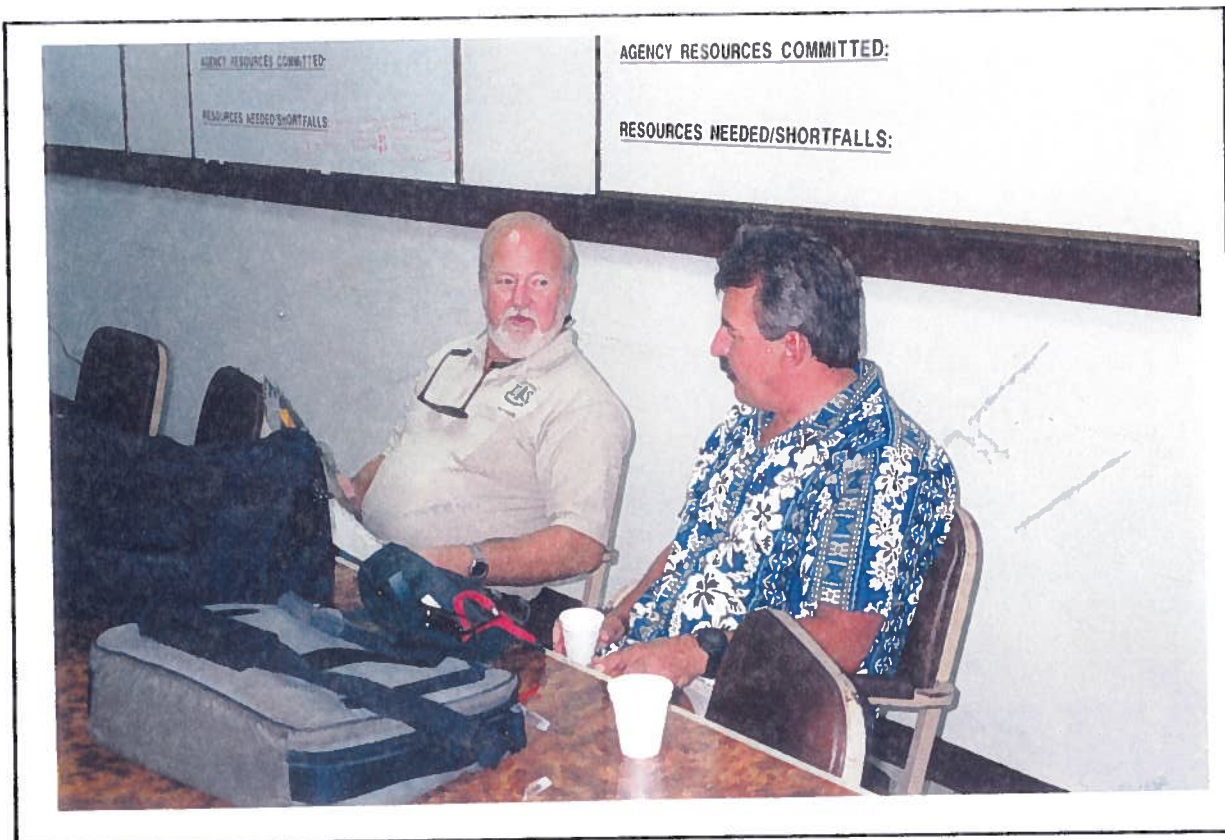
(Above): DOFAW Fire Training Cadre, clockwise l-r: Glenn Shishido (Maui), Galen Kawakami (Kauai), Ed Brodie (Hawaii), Steve Bergfeld (Hawaii), Earl Pawn (Oahu), Wayne Ching (State Protection Forester).
 (Below): Glenn and Earl look over some budget numbers with USFS R5 Asst. Dir. Dennis Orbus.





(Above): Rusty Witwer, reviews several lighting devices to the students of the S-234 class. (Below): Bob Bennett gets set to toss a device. The S-234 class is only one of a few classes that are put on annually for DOFAW and its cooperating partners statewide.





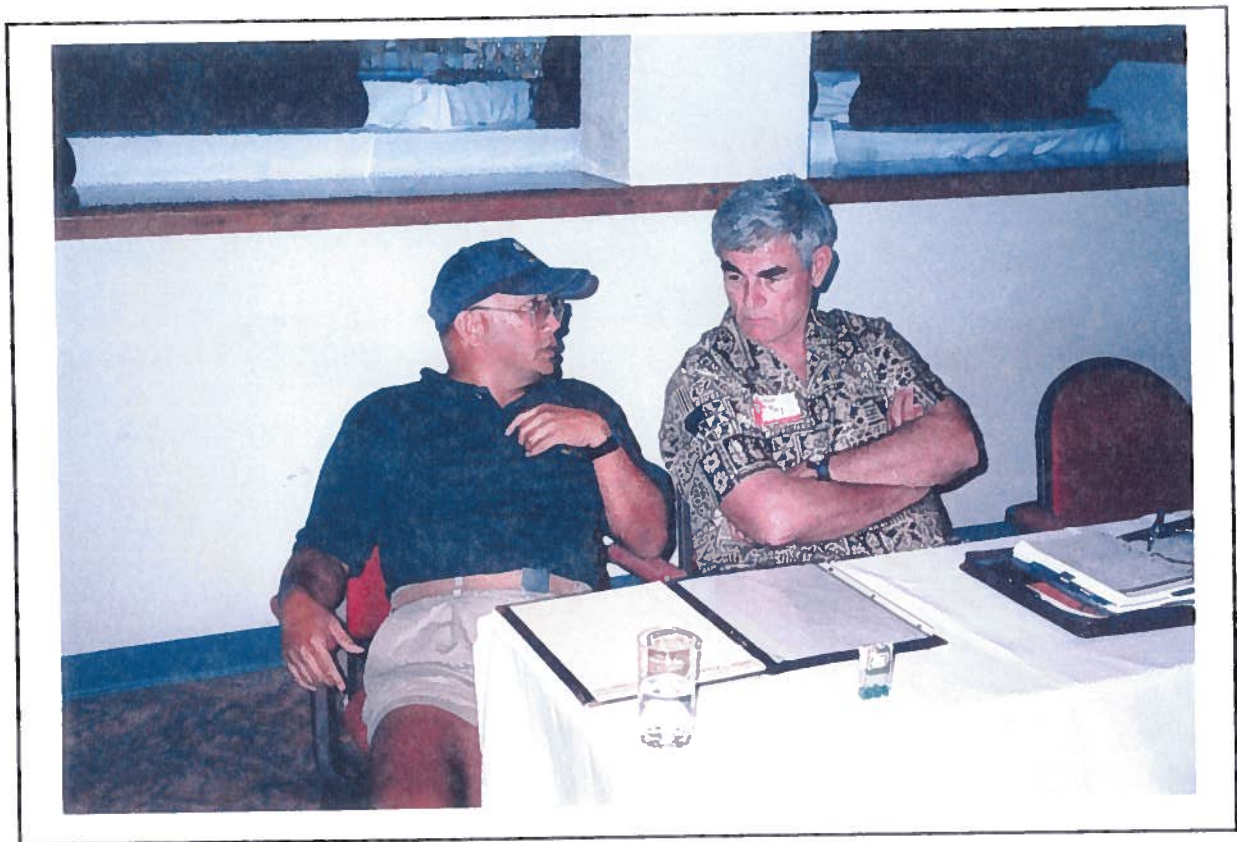
(Above): Charlie Gripp and Mike Madden get set to teach the ICS course. (Below): This picture proves that this world is getting smaller each day. Here, students pose with instructors after a grueling 4-hr. simulation. The students came from Saipan, Chuuk, Yap, American Samoa, and Micronesia.





(Above & Below): DOFAW was host to the annual Western State Fire Managers' (WSFM) business meeting which was held on April 10-12, 2000 on Maui. The WSFM is a consortium of the fire management officers of the 17 western states whose objective is to work on fire issues that affect the West, including Hawaii and the western Pacific.





(Above): Oahu Branch Manager Patrick Costales confers with USFS R5 Dir. Ray Quintanar during a break at a recent conference. (Below): Conferences and interagency meetings are excellent examples of opportunities to exchange ideas and update each other on supporting technologies.

